

July / August 2012

adoption

opening hearts. changing lives.

INDIANA'S ADOPTION PROGRAM



Opening hearts. Changing lives.

Meet Ghislene and Brock.

Ghislene and Brock Legere decided to become foster parents at a very young age—19 and 20 respectively! They had always had a love for children and they were influenced by advocates promoting adoption and foster care on television and in their lives. They had the time, love, resources, space, and most importantly they had a passion to help Indiana's waiting foster children. Ghislene and Brock started fostering children and after several foster care placements they were called to pick up a baby at the hospital that had been exposed to drugs in utero. Ghislene states, "I knew this was my baby as soon as I held her." Ghislene and Brock were approached by the Department of Child Services (DCS) to adopt their now oldest daughter, Destiny, who is currently 10-years old. On Ghislene's 21st birthday, the adoption was finalized. What a great birthday present!

Brock and Ghislene continued to foster as they welcomed their birth son, Elliott (now 6), to their family. In December 2007, they received a call about a birth sibling to their oldest daughter and pursued the placement so the girls could be together. The Legeres knew they wanted to bring another child into their home and in 2008 they finalized their adoption with their youngest daughter, Kylie (now 4). Currently, the two girls are visiting with their biological brother, who was adopted by another family. The children play, watch movies, and spend time together; the Legeres encourage the important connections and interactions the children have with each other. All of the children are extremely close and the best of friends.

Ghislene has invested much time and energy into adoption—both personally and professionally. For three years, Ghislene has been helping to train foster and adoptive families throughout the state of Indiana, as well as advocating for and promoting adoption.

Although Brock and Ghislene's oldest daughter was very ill as an infant, Destiny is now happy and getting healthier each day, thanks to the love and support of friends, family, and an amazing Marion County DCS caseworker. Having three children and working full-time keeps this family busy and happy, and they will tell anyone who will listen about the joys of adoption through the foster care system.



Welcome to the Indiana Adoption Program

The Indiana Adoption Program is a statewide effort to create permanence for children who are wards of the State of Indiana. It is a program of the Indiana Department of Child Services in collaboration with the Children's Bureau, Inc.

There are many aspects of adoption and the Indiana Adoption Program is just one of those aspects. We will help you consider some aspects of adoption in this book.

The picture book is also available on the internet. To view a current list of children available go to <http://www.adoptuskids.org/states/in/index.aspx>. You may download a PDF copy of this "Opening Hearts. Changing Lives" Adoption Picture Book at <http://www.in.gov/dcs/2737.htm>

To learn more about Children's Bureau, Inc., see us on the web at: www.childrens-bureau.org or call for a brochure: 317-545-5281.

To mail correspondence to the Indiana Adoption program send to:

The Indiana Adoption Program
c/o Children's Bureau Inc.
3801 N. Temple Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46205

PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN,
FAMILIES & FUTURE.

JAMES W. PAYNE, DIRECTOR



Opening hearts. Changing lives.

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If I inquire about a child, does this mean I will get to adopt this child?

A prospective adoptive parent must have completed the Family Preparation process and be approved to adopt a child introduced in this book. If you are just beginning that process or have not yet begun, a child you see here may be living with a new family before you complete the Family Preparation process.

If you become their adoptive parent, a child's future development, well being, and sense of family and community will rest with you.

Therefore, adoption requires serious considerations.

The child's social worker or adoption team will help determine if you and your family are compatible with the child and there may also be several families that are considering the same child.

Subscription Information

You can receive a six-month subscription to this magazine by mailing a \$15 check along with your name and address to:

Children's Bureau Inc.
3801 N. Temple Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46205

If you have any questions please call
1-888-25-ADOPT.

Meet Our Children

In this book you will see many different faces of youth. The words next to their faces only tell a partial story. Their biography is not complete. Any young person's story is worthy of telling you, yet what you read here about them is just a few short sentences.

The paragraphs next to each child are an introduction. Beyond the paragraphs, we want you to know the whole biography of a child when you are considering making a commitment as a parent; however here in this book we balance your need to know with a child's need for privacy and sense of well-being.

Children who have experienced foster care all have one thing in common: they have had to leave their home. And by that very fact alone, their need for healing, stability and nurturing requires attention. Children who have had to endure neglect, abuse, or trauma can face many challenges. Those challenges can range from mild to severe and can also be temporary or permanent.

The challenges our children face will not be detailed in the introductions. Listing a short medical or mental health diagnosis can sometimes be misleading and can breach confidentiality. You can read about some of the challenges that are common to many children in the adoption program in a separate section of this book.

In the adoption program, many of the children are older and may have physical, mental or emotional impairments. Some have brothers and sisters in the program with them and they may need to live together or they may need to keep their essential connection to each other through different living arrangements.

The youth featured in this book are in foster care and they may live with a foster family or they may be living in a group home or other child-caring facility such as a treatment center. Every child needs the love and support of a family. We invite you to learn more about adopting children in the Indiana Adoption Program.

You will see a number next to each child's introduction. Please refer to this number when making an inquiry about them.

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Creg (10) and Gregory (10)

Creg has a great sense of humor and is very affectionate. He likes to be outdoors and enjoys riding bikes, running, and playing basketball. Creg is in to superheroes and loves to pretend he is the Incredible Hulk. He also likes Spiderman, monster trucks, and SpongeBob Squarepants. Creg is doing well in school and likes to have stories read to him. He is very bonded to his twin brother Gregory and sees himself as his protector.

Gregory is eager to please others and likes to help out around the house. He is a loving and affectionate little boy. He loves playing outside, riding on his bike, drawing, and coloring. Like his brother, he enjoys having stories read to him.

These boys would benefit from being in family that is physically active and enjoys being outdoors. They need parents that can be patient and supportive while providing consistency, structure, and clear boundaries. (5061ABKY) *Allen County*



Chris (11) and Nicholas (10)

Chris is a very friendly and outgoing little boy. He loves country music and likes to sing. He also likes playing with his cars and trucks and other toys.

Nicholas is shy at first but warms up once he gets to know you. He loves going to school and being around people. He likes to draw and write his letters.

These boys have many special medical needs and developmental delays due to injuries suffered in a house fire. Chris uses a wheelchair at school but is able to scoot around the house without his chair. Both boys need close supervision and assistance with all self-care tasks. Interested families will need to be able to provide structure, routine and a well-supervised environment. The home will need to be wheelchair accessible for Chris. (6096ABBD) *Madison County*



Billy (12) and Allison (8)

Billy enjoys reading, games, projects, arts and crafts, and singing. He does well academically and can express empathy to others. He is learning to take responsibility for his actions and is making progress in this area. Billy is a good student and is academically successful. Billy needs a family that will be committed to him and provide support and guidance in helping him navigate peer relationships and interactions with adults in authority.

Allison may be small in size but has a big personality! She is outgoing, energetic and likes to be helpful. Due to developmental delays, including speech delays and cognitive challenges Allison can be easily overwhelmed. Allison needs a caring, supportive family willing to engage support services and advocate on her behalf. Allison has many, many appointments related to the support services she receives and will need caregivers that have the flexibility to attend appointments with her and also work with her on her issues at home with home-based providers. Allison needs a family that will accept and understand her limitations and be willing to work with her on a daily basis.

Billy and Allison need a loving, patient family that will provide good supervision and are willing to work with outside service providers. Families with knowledge of and/or experience with medical, developmental, psychological, and emotional special needs are desired. Because these children receive many services and have many therapeutic appointments, interested families will need to have the flexibility to take the children to and from appointments and work closely with the service providers. (7056ABKY) *Allen County*



Keon (9) and Anthony (7)

Keon is a quiet and intelligent nine-year old. He enjoys playing basketball and baseball, but loves karate. He often is on honor roll at school and he loves to learn from books. Keon gets along well with his peers. He loves his little brother and is very protective of him. He also loves animals and enjoys playing with them.

Anthony is a lovable, adorable seven-year old. He loves doing karate with his brother. Anthony enjoys dancing and has been able to attend hip-hop dance classes. He is an outgoing and energetic child. He loves animals and playing games with his peers.

Anthony and Keon do well in a structured, nurturing, and stable environment. The children would benefit from a two-parent or single parent home with older children in the home. Having consistency in the home would also be beneficial to the children as they transition in their placement. (8009ABIA) *Lake County*



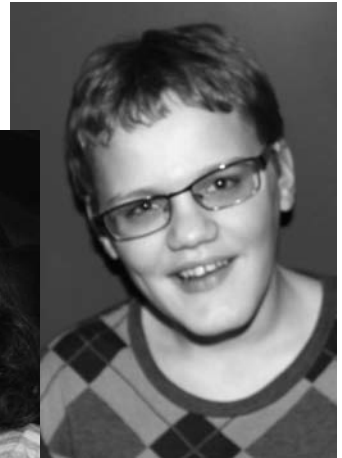
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Alex (17) & Nicole (14)

Alex is a sweet, affectionate boy. He can write out his words and type them too, but mostly he uses sign language to communicate. If you tell him he can have one piece of cheese, he'll change your hand so that it is holding up three fingers instead of one. He is clever and has a hearty appetite! He is very ticklish and he loves spending time on the computer.

Nicole is a very gentle and sweet young girl. Though Nicole does not speak, she does smile. She likes to hear music, especially songs for children. She also enjoys having a roommate. She likes interactions with people and also likes objects that light up or make noise. She enjoys toys that stimulate her senses.

These children will need a family with an extended support system since they require 24/7 care. They need a family that can provide constant supervision and plenty of attention to their medical and physical needs. Families that are familiar with autism, cerebral palsy, and diabetes would be preferred. Single-parent and two-parent homes will be considered. (8047ABBD) *Madison County*



Anna (15) Makayla (14), & Destiny (10) 🧑🧒

Anna is a creative and caring young girl. She volunteers at a nursing home, helps manage the basketball team, and enjoys shopping, especially for clothes and shoes. She loves to eat any meal that includes potatoes. Her favorite colors are orange and lime green. Anna likes school, especially art and English, and she would like to be a nurse when she grows up.

Makayla, also known as KK, loves to read, swim, draw on the sidewalk with chalk, volunteer, and hang out with friends. She is a respectful, helpful young girl who loves kids, basketball, and school. Her favorite meal is hashbrown casserole and pork chops. Church is very important to Makayla. She would like to be a nurse when she grows up. She would also like to visit Arizona someday.

Destiny is very outgoing and likes everyone! She enjoys school, especially writing. Her favorite color is dark blue and she loves horses, dogs, cats, rhinos, elephants, and wolves. She would like to be a vet when she grows up. Potato salad is one of her favorite foods and she loves to listen to country music. Destiny would like to visit the Bahamas one day.

These girls would like to live with a mom and a dad. Their school and church is important to them. An active family, possibly one with pets, would be a good fit for these siblings. Their new home will need to provide supervision and enough time and energy to dedicate toward one-on-one attention with each girl. (8079ABCBBD) *Jackson County*



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WESTERN SPRING FLING



interact with each other in a natural environment. The theme was “Western Spring Fling” and the attendees came fixin’ to pan for gold, wet their whistles by drinking root beer at the saloon, wear cowboy hats, and ride horses. There

was also a station where a rodeo clown provided face paint, though Christopher preferred arm paint, as seen by the snake on his arm.



At this meetin’, Alex, Christopher, Dakota, Jerry, Josh, Kristian, and Kristopher ate hotdogs and made new friends. Josh and Dakota were naturals at riding their broncos. Christopher handed out cowboy hats—what a helper! Alex and Josh rode in a carriage. Kristopher mingled with folks and made friends easily. Kristian liked watching the event. Jerry very much enjoyed his sucker. Finally, the whole crew had a heyday on a hayride!

If you are interested in attending a match event, becoming a SNAP recommended family, and meeting Indiana’s waiting children, please find the SNAP Specialist in your area on the back page of this magazine. From them, you can learn how to share your home, home on the range.



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Justin (11)

When asked what he likes to do, Justin says he likes to, "swing on the swing and listen to the trees and the pond." He loves being outside, especially when he can jump on the trampoline. When he is inside, his favorite things to do are playing his Nintendo DS and doing anything relating to Pokemon. His favorite food is pizza and he loves to dance.

Justin needs a stable family who can be patient and provide him with a lot of time and attention. He would benefit greatly from having an active father figure. Justin will do best in a family with no other children or significantly older children. (3641BS) *Monroe County*



Christopher (13) 🐼

Christopher enjoys family outings such as going to church, skating and going to amusement parks. He likes stuffed animals, especially dinosaurs. Christopher collects Pokemon cards and various game cards. He also likes playing video games, skateboarding, and going shopping. Christopher enjoys helping with household chores such as sweeping and mopping. Christopher is doing well academically and with his peers. His favorite foods from McDonald's are the hamburger and chicken sandwiches. Christopher's favorite movies are "The Goonies" and "Digimon" and his favorite cartoon is "Courage the Cowardly Dog." His favorite colors are blue, red, and green. He enjoys playing baseball and kickball, reading, and playing on the playground.

It would be beneficial for Christopher to be placed with two parents and preferably a home with older children or no children in the home. The family would need to provide patience, support, encouragement and guidance to allow Christopher in adjusting to the home. Christopher is very eager to have a family of his own. (36721A) *Lake County*



Jerry (12)

Jerry is a pleasant, affectionate little boy who likes to give and receive hugs. He enjoys wrestling and rough-housing on the floor. He likes music and will dance and sometimes babble, trying to sing along. He likes to rock in his rocking chair or on a rocking horse. Jerry likes swinging and climbing into things he can sit in.

Jerry is a sweet little boy who needs a family that can be patient and loving with him. Families with an extended support system, and knowledge and understanding of developmental delays and autism are preferred. (3682BD) *Bartholomew County*

Toby (11)

Toby just learned how to swim, and would gladly take your hand and ask you to play with him, whether it is in the pool, on the trampoline, or on the computer. Toby is a friendly, outgoing child who loves to be helpful. Toby has made great strides with communication skills and activities of daily living. He is eager to please others and responds positively to attention and affection. Toby needs an experienced family that can provide structure, routine and close supervision at all times. A two-parent or family with a strong extended support system is preferred.

(3716MO) *Delaware County*



Julie (14)

Julie likes to draw pictures. She has an interest in art. Julie is active and enjoys spending time outdoors. She enjoys swimming, playing baseball, and jumping on the trampoline. She has participated in piano, tennis, and voice lessons. Julie is outgoing and friendly and has a warm personality. She is constantly smiling and loves to give and receive hugs. She is warm, playful, energetic, and helpful. One day she would like to enroll in gymnastics lessons.

Julie's sisters are an important part of her life. Julie would benefit from a two-parent home. She would do well in a family that is supportive, understanding, and committed to her.

(3718BS) *Crawford County*



Felicia (16)

Felicia is an intelligent, warm, and helpful young lady. She has a very friendly personality. Felicia is quite the athlete. She loves to stay active and enjoys playing volleyball and swimming. She has played sports in the past. She also likes to watch television and movies. She enjoys spending time with her friends and sisters.

Felicia would benefit from a two-parent home with no other children. A family that is supportive, understanding, and committed would be beneficial for her. The adoptive family will also need to be available and willing to maintain contact between Felicia and her sisters.

(3719BS) *Crawford County*



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Justin (15)

Justin is fascinated by electronics. He loves visiting websites on the internet and has even designed a few web pages of his own—one is about fire safety. Christmas is his favorite holiday and "Elf" is his favorite movie. He thinks he might have the whole movie memorized! Justin is a friendly, intellectual, and outgoing young man. He loves to have conversations and he is very popular among his peers and adults. He enjoys watching television, playing outside, and being on the computer. When he grows up, he would like to work in the film industry, either making films or editing them.

Justin needs a family that can provide stability, structure, and consistency. A patient, loving family with no children or older children would be ideal for Justin. Single-parent and two-parent homes will be considered. (4000IA) *Lake County*



Kristian (13)

Kristian is an energetic young man who loves to jump and climb. His favorite activities are playing on the jungle gym and in the water. Kristian also enjoys spending quiet time cuddled in a blanket and watching a Disney video or having a book read to him.

Kristian has been making progress with some activities of daily living and responds well to positive rewards. He will need a loving and patient family who will support this growth and can provide structure, routine and close supervision at all times. (4016KY) *Allen County*



Christian (17)

Christian describes himself as easygoing and friendly. He is very talkative and likes helping others. Christian enjoys playing sports, especially football and basketball. He also likes to go fishing. Christian is intelligent and does well in school. His favorite subjects are reading and spelling. He loves to read mystery novels.

Christian would enjoy living in the country. He likes to be busy and needs a loving family that can provide consistency and structure, and can support him in his continued growth. Families with parenting experience are preferred. (4023MO) *Blackford County*



Look for this symbol throughout our children's pages; it indicates that they have recorded a video message. You can view their video on-line at www.adoptuskids.org/states/IN.

Devonte (16)

Devonte is a charming young man who is eager to be adopted. He enjoys wrestling, football, and being active. Devonte has expressed an interest in joining a step team at school and wants to play the clarinet. He also likes to listen to music, watch movies, and explore the internet.

Devonte needs a family that can be patient and loving yet firm in their rules and expectations. He would do best in a two-parent home with a positive male father figure. Devonte has a brother with whom he will need to maintain contact. (4056KY) *St. Joseph County*



Logan (17)

Logan loves to talk and has a good sense of humor. He is very outgoing and enjoys interacting with both adults and peers. He enjoys taking trips, going to the movies, playing basketball, and eating out at restaurants. Logan's hobbies are playing video games and collecting Hot Wheels cars. He enjoys being outdoors and likes to do yard work. Logan has made a lot of progress in the last year and is currently on the A/B Honor Roll at school. He is interested in working with his hands and is considering becoming an auto mechanic.

Logan is at his best when he has a structured and consistent environment. Logan needs a loving family that can be attentive to his needs. He would do best as the only or youngest child in the family. (4057IA) *Jasper County*



Sylvester (10)

Sylvester wants to be famous when he grows up! He hopes to be a basketball star or a musician. Sylvester is a very lovable, outgoing, and handsome little boy. In the summer he loves to play in the pool. He enjoys watching the Disney Channel, coloring, and dancing. Sylvester is bright and maintains good grades in school.

Sylvester needs a nurturing family that can provide stability, supervision, and appropriate medical attention. He would greatly benefit from a two-parent home. Sylvester needs a strong male figure who will be consistent with discipline and who is willing to spend a lot of one-on-one time with him. He would do best in a home where he is the youngest child. He needs a family with a lot of patience and love to get him through the trauma that he has experienced. Sylvester has siblings with whom he will need to maintain contact. (4063IA) *Lake County*



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Cyerra (16) 🧑

Cyerra is very exuberant and has a great smile. She has a good sense of humor and likes to laugh. She is full of energy and has many interests. Cyerra likes music and loves to sing and dance. She enjoys playing basketball, rollerblading, and doing crafts. Cyerra describes herself as a "girly-girl" in the sense that she likes getting her hair and nails done and loves to shop for clothes. She loves to sing and has a big voice! Cyerra has a love for animals and enjoys volunteering at the local animal shelter.

She would love to be part of a family that likes to be active and do things together. She enjoys helping around the house with chores and says she even likes to do dishes! Cyerra will do best in family that can provide consistent structure, boundaries, and consequences. Cyerra needs a family that can give her a lot of time and attention as she has missed this in her life.

(4073BD) *Bartholomew County*



Brianna (13) 🧑

Brianna is a very sweet and loving little girl. She very much enjoys one-on-one attention with adults. She can be very caring and empathetic to those she feels are less fortunate. She enjoys playing with baby dolls and likes to have her hair brushed and styled. She loves playing on the playground and playing basketball. She is very enthusiastic about going swimming!

Brianna needs a family that can give her a lot of care and attention. She needs a nurturing family that will be patient and encourage her to develop to her fullest potential. Parents with experience with special needs children are preferred. (4077KY) *St. Joseph County*



Lewis (14) 🧑

Lewis is the best swimmer in his class! He loves to swim laps as fast as possible. He can hold his breath underwater for long periods of time, but he has no desire to go scuba diving because "those tanks can run out of air!" Lewis has a good sense of humor, a beautiful smile, and a contagious laugh. Reading is one of his favorite activities. "I could read every book in the library," he says. He also enjoys soccer and Chinese checkers. Lewis describes himself as kind and generous, nice and neat, and strong. He collects coins and loves to discuss them. He wants to be a scientist or a doctor someday, but also thinks he would make a great construction worker because he loves to dig holes and be outside.

Lewis would do best in a structured home that can offer stability and consistency. A family that is patient, understanding, and able to provide one-on-one attention would be ideal. Two-parent families are preferred. (4089IA) *Porter County*



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Michael (17)

Michael likes to be out in nature and enjoys fishing, swimming, and camping. He also enjoys sports such as football, basketball, and soccer. Michael has a good sense of humor and likes to make people laugh. He likes drawing and is quite a talented artist. Michael is an avid reader and likes to read comics and all kinds of books, particularly scary books.

Michael very much wants to be part of a family and hopes to have a sibling or two as well as a pet. He will need a family that can provide structure and consistency and someone willing to assist him with his school work. Michael would do best with older siblings or as an only child. Two-parent families are preferred. (4090IA) *Porter County*



Cheyenne (16)

Cheyenne is friendly and affectionate and has an upbeat sense of humor. She enjoys playing basketball, watching television, listening to rap music, and going shopping. Cheyenne's favorite thing to shop for is shoes! She is very talkative and is not shy about expressing her thoughts and feelings. She enjoys school and says math is her favorite subject.

Cheyenne would like to join a family. Ideally she would like to have a mother and a father, but she is open to considering a single-parent or non-traditional family as well. Cheyenne needs a loving, patient family that can provide structure and consistent rules and expectations. Cheyenne has a sister with whom she will need to maintain contact. (4096KY) *Allen County*



Terry (14)

Terry loves to ride quad bikes. He also likes to play football and basketball and go fishing. In school, Terry likes math and reading classes. He gets along with his peers and adults, participates in school activities, and has a good sense of humor. Terry enjoys playing video games and watching movies. He listens to a variety of music, from country to rock'n'roll. Terry is very outgoing, funny, and playful. He likes dogs and cats. His favorite foods are fried chicken and mash potatoes and McDonald's cheeseburgers. The Lakers and the Patriots are his favorite sport teams.

Terry would thrive in a two-parent home or with a family that is able to show him affection and patience and provide consistency and structure. Having clear expectations and being placed with no other children or older children would be beneficial to Terry. (4098MO) *Rush County*



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Janicca (14)

Janicca is a very bright and intelligent child. She enjoys going to school. She has made great progress socially and educationally. She does her chores and is very responsible. She enjoys going to church. Janicca likes to be witty and funny. She is good at expressing herself and will share with others how she is feeling. She loves having her hair and nails done and likes to do other "girly" things.

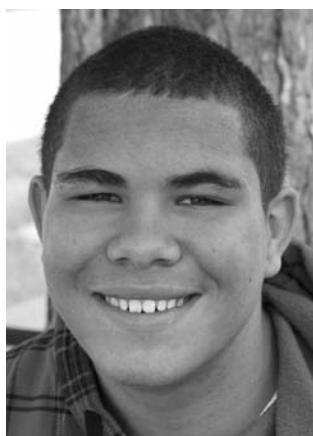
Janicca would benefit from being placed in a highly structured home with a single-parent or two-parent family and with older or no other children in the home. (5008MO) *Delaware County*



Jeremy (12)

Jeremy is a lively, delightful conversationalist! He is a loving, affectionate little boy who is full of energy and likes to play sports. Jeremy says he, "loves, loves, loves, school!" He is doing well academically and gets along well with peers. Jeremy has a good sense of humor and can be very funny. He enjoys entertaining people around him. He is a big fan of Michael Jackson's music and will enthusiastically sing "Beat It" for the willing listener. When he grows up, Jeremy wants to play for the NFL until he retires, then he wants to go into the NBA. Jeremy is fascinated by iPods and MP3 players and would like to have one of his own. Jeremy likes to help others. Doing so gives him a sense of accomplishment. He likes animals, especially big dogs, and enjoys helping to care for them.

Jeremy is excited about joining a family and hopes to have both a mom and a dad. Ideally, he would like to live out in the country and be around animals. Jeremy needs a loving family that can provide structure, routine, patience, and security. (5014BS) *Knox County*



Brian (15)

Brian is a bright young man who learns things quickly. He enjoys listening to music and singing. Brian likes to play on the computer, but also enjoys outdoor activities such as baseball and rock climbing. He loves to be the center of attention and is never at a loss for words.

Brian needs a family that will provide firm, loving boundaries and structure. He would benefit greatly from having a strong, positive male role model. (5026IA) *LaPorte County*



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Steven (13)

Steven is an energetic and friendly little boy with a mega-watt smile! He is very excited about being adopted and joining a family. He likes to learn new things and says math is his favorite subject in school. He loves playing outside and playing football and basketball with his friends. Steven says, "I'm a really good artist and I like to draw!" He also likes helping others in whatever way he can. He thinks he would like to be a teacher when he grows up so he can help other kids. Steven loves to eat and some of his favorite foods are Big Macs, spaghetti and meatballs, and Chinese food. His favorite restaurant is Bob Evans and he loves their dinner rolls.

Steven needs a family that can be patient with him and provide structure and clear expectations and boundaries. Ideally, Steven would like to have a mom and a dad and be part of a family that has pets. Steven would do best in a home where he could be the only child or the youngest child. (5037MO) *Jay County*



Darrin (16)

Darrin likes being outside, listening to music, and playing sports. His favorite sports include basketball, soccer, and baseball. Darrin also enjoys playing video games and watching "Sponge Bob Square Pants." Recently Darrin got five fish to go in the pond where he lives. He enjoys helping to care for them. Darrin is a quiet young man and enjoys having some personal space and time to process his feelings. He likes school and is making good progress academically.

Darrin needs a family that will continue to support his academic growth and allow him to have some personal space and time to himself. He likes pets and would benefit from learning to care for a dog or a cat. Darrin would do best as an only child or with perhaps one older child in the home. He needs loving parents that can provide structure and consistency. (5079SS) *Marion County*



Morgan (16)

Morgan is friendly and likes to meet new people. She has a great sense of humor and can be very playful. She loves to sing and dance! Morgan also loves to go shopping, especially for clothes and shoes. She likes going to the movies and going to Golden Corral, her favorite restaurant.

Morgan says she would like to have both a mother and a father, and wouldn't mind having an older brother or sister to look up to. She will do well with a family that can provide structure and clear boundaries, rules, and expectations. (5084BD) *Clark County*



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Brittany (15)

Brittany loves to learn and works hard in school. Her teachers say that she is very helpful in class and gets along well with other children. Brittany likes having her hair done and wearing pretty clothes. She also likes playing outside, swimming, reading, and playing computer games.

Brittany is looking forward to having a family that can give her a lot of one-on-one attention. She likes doing family activities like going to the movies, taking walks, and playing games. Brittany needs a family that can provide structure, routine, and consistency. Two-parent families are preferred. (5090IA) *Porter County*



Crystal (17)

Crystal would like to be a foster parent when she is older so that she can share her experiences with others and teach children about forgiveness. Crystal is an intelligent and intuitive girl who enjoys going to church. Crystal also likes spending time with her friends and talking on the phone. Her favorite food is pizza and her favorite color is blue. Crystal enjoys the Twilight movies and books, and is looking forward to the continuance of the series.

Crystal prefers living in a city rather than in the country, but is most interested in being with a family that will love her and spend time with her. Crystal needs a family that can provide structure and clear boundaries and expectations. Crystal would benefit from being placed in a single-parent or a two-parent home with a family that is patient. She has siblings with whom she will need to maintain contact. (6001MO) *Delaware County*



Damar (14)

Damar is a creative, engaging young man who is eager to be adopted! He is friendly, outgoing, and very likeable. Damar enjoys music, playing video games, doing computer searches, and shopping at gaming stores. He thinks he might like to design gaming systems and games for a living someday.

Damar is looking forward to having a father who will spend time with him doing things like working on electronics, playing video games, or going fishing. Damar needs a loving family that can provide consistent rules, boundaries, and expectations. He is at his best when he has a routine in a stable environment. Damar has a brother with whom he will need to maintain contact. (6004KY) *Allen County*

Roger (14)

Roger is a very helpful young man. He enjoys helping his foster mother around the house by cleaning and assisting with the laundry. He loves to read books and enjoys having others read to him. Roger has become involved in Irish dancing through a local church and greatly enjoys that activity. Roger gets along well with others and loves receiving attention.

Roger needs a family that can be patient and will nurture his development. A two-parent home that can provide supervision and consistency would be ideal. Families with knowledge and understanding of developmental disabilities are preferred. (6023KY) *St. Joseph County*



Samantha (14)

Samantha describes herself as "creative and girly." She enjoys talking to her friends, listening to music, getting her hair done, and shopping for shoes, clothes, and purses. When asked what she likes, she says that "HUGS!," animals, and the colors purple, black, and neon green are her favorite things. She likes to be outdoors to go swimming or to walk on trails through the woods. Samantha would love to ride a roller coaster at an amusement park, go on a shopping spree, and go swimming in Florida someday.

Samantha is eager to have an adoptive home and would do best in an active family that can provide structure and clear boundaries and expectations. (6026SS) *Marion County*



Akeem (17)

Akeem enjoys sports, video games, and playing on the computer. He also likes to play basketball and go bowling. Akeem is shy with strangers, but likes to joke and tease with people he knows. He is caring and creative and likes to help others. He has a good sense of humor and likes to make others laugh.

Akeem needs a loving supportive family that is willing to advocate for his educational needs and support services. Akeem will do best in a home where he is the only child. (6039BD) *Bartholomew County*



Opening hearts. Changing lives.



Marisa (16)

Marisa loves animals and hopes to be an "animal cop" when she grows up. Marisa is very active and likes to keep busy. She enjoys swimming, camping out, and going to new places. Marisa likes reading, drawing, and shopping! She likes school and says her favorite subject is math.

Marisa needs a loving family that can provide structure, consistency, and stability. Both single-parent and two-parent families will be considered. (6040BD) *Scott County*



Summer (15)

Summer loves animals very much. She once fixed a dog's paw and it inspired her to want to be a vet someday. In the meantime, she would like to volunteer at an animal shelter. Summer's favorite food is ice cream and she likes to give and receive hugs. Though shy at first, she actually loves being the center of attention. She describes herself as a "country girl" and would enjoy living out in the country and having pets. She especially loves wrinkly dogs. Summer likes to play games and is known among her friends as a "card shark." Her favorite card game is Rummy. Summer enjoys being outdoors and likes playing soccer and softball. She also likes to go fishing.

Summer needs a family that can provide structure and stability. She thinks she would be most comfortable with a single mother, but she is open to other families as well as long as they are able to give her a loving home. (6046BS) *Dubois County*



Dustin (17)

Dustin is a very compassionate and caring young man. He enjoys playing football, swimming, and fishing. He likes listening to music, playing video games, and drawing. Dustin likes to have fun and enjoys participating in activities with both peers and adults. He likes being outdoors and enjoys working in the yard.

Dustin is eager to join a family and would like have both a mom and a dad. He would like to have siblings and hopes his new family will have pets. Dustin needs a loving family that will set clear boundaries and expectations and advocate for him educationally. (6054SS) *Marion County*

Brandon (14) 🧐

Brandon wants to be a famous actor when he grows up! He will soon begin acting classes. He is a charming young man and he has a wonderful smile. Language Arts is his favorite subject in school and someday he would love to visit Times Square. Brandon likes playing video games, drawing, and making comics. He is very much into martial arts and has received a black belt in three different arts!

Brandon is a friendly, polite, and respectful young man who needs a patient family that will continue to encourage him and can give him a lot of time and attention. Brandon would like to have both a mother and a father and he hopes his new family will enjoy spending time together. He would do best in a home where there are younger children, or where he can be an only child. (60641A) *Lake County*



Brandon (16)

Brandon is bright and creative. He even invented his own board game! Brandon has a great personality and loves to joke and tease. Brandon likes playing video and computer games, fishing, and playing sports. He likes being outdoors and enjoys gardening and bee keeping.

Brandon needs a family that can provide a structured environment with clear boundaries and expectations. Two-parent families are preferred. (60651A) *Starke County*



Brandon (17)

Brandon is a friendly, profound, and intelligent boy. He says he admires Ghandi and Martin Luther King, Jr. because they stood for their beliefs. Brandon is a great conversationalist and he has a winning smile. He thinks that he would like to be neurosurgeon, not for the pay but because they help people. Brandon also admires Ben Carson, a neurosurgeon, and is currently reading Dr. Carson's books. Brandon likes science as well as writing and reciting poetry. He calls himself a "nature freak" and wolves are his favorite animal.

Brandon is eager to be adopted and longs to have a sense of belonging. Ideally he would like to have both a mother and a father. Having a positive male role model would be of great benefit to him. Brandon needs a family that will be patient and supportive as he transitions into his new family. (60661A) *LaPorte County*



Opening hearts. Changing lives.



Brandy (11)

Brandy is very friendly and outgoing. She enjoys being the center of attention and loves to talk! She likes to play all kinds of games and enjoys being outdoors, learning to swim, and collecting Sing-a-ma-jigs and coins that she finds on the ground. Brandy has an independent nature and has a creative side. She loves singing, dancing, and learning to cook new dishes. She is very bright and likes learning new things in school. Brandy would love to be part of a two-parent family and is wishing for a big sister. Her face lights up when she talks about animals and says she would really like to help care for a pet. She loves puppies, kittens, baby birds, and squirrels. Her favorite thing about herself how everyone compliments her red hair!

Brandy will do best with a family that can provide close supervision and guidance. She will benefit from a stable home environment where there is a consistent routine with clear expectations and boundaries. She will do best in a home where she can be the youngest child.

(6069SS) *Vigo County*



Brian (12)

Brian is a friendly, charming little boy! He has lots of energy and likes to go outside and run as fast as he can. He loves to play basketball and football. He is a Colts fan. Brian likes to help others and does not mind doing chores. He says he is really good at cleaning and likes to help with the cooking too. His favorite chef is Paula Dean and he loves trying new foods. Brian likes riding his bike, coloring, and playing games.

Brian thinks that he would like to have both a mom and a dad. He hopes there will be other children in his new home. He needs loving, energetic parents who can provide patience, understanding, and a stable environment. Brian has siblings with whom he will need to maintain contact. (6085SS) *Marion County*



Nathan (15)

Nathan likes to know how things work and enjoys taking things apart and putting them back together. He likes to be helpful and often offers to set the table for dinner. Nathan loves horses and likes to care for them, even if it means cleaning the stalls! He also likes skateboarding, NASCAR racing, and watching movies. Nathan can be a sweet, loving boy. He likes to engage in one-on-one activity with adults. Nathan likes playing basketball and is a Pacers fan. Nathan's favorite food is bacon and he would like to visit Nevada or Kenya someday.

Nathan needs a family that can provide a safe, stable home environment with good supervision and clear expectations and boundaries. Nathan has a brother with whom he will need to maintain contact. (6086DH) *Putnam County*

Paul (12)

Paul is a friendly and kind little boy who likes to help others. He is known for helping his peers with their school work or even with their chores! Paul likes playing video games and reading comic books. He likes being outdoors and playing basketball with his friends too. Paul enjoys school and is making mostly A's and B's on his report card. He enjoys science and learning about space. He likes rap music and says one of his favorite artists is Lil' Wayne.

Paul needs a loving family and would benefit greatly from having positive adult role models. He will do best with a family that will be supportive and encouraging. He needs a stable home with structure and consistent rules and consequences. (6089BD) *Madison County*



Damont (14)

Damont is a sweet and lovable boy. He enjoys playing video games and playing football. He likes school and is a capable student. Damont is eager to be part of a family and enjoys participating in activities with his foster family. He enjoys participating in church life and hopes his new family will share this value.

Damont needs a loving family that will make a permanent commitment to him. He is at his best in a structured environment with clear boundaries and expectations. (6099KY) *Allen County*



De'Angelo (15)

De'Angelo is creative in many areas including art, sculpture, music, and poetry to name a few! He is gifted at drawing cars and airplanes. During the summer he enjoys playing basketball and football. During the winter he uses his energy to build forts, pack snowballs, and make snow angels.

De'Angelo needs to feel a true sense of belonging with a strong family that can dedicate themselves to meeting his multiple needs and helping him develop a sense of self-worth. De'Angelo will do best in a home with a consistent routine and structure, as well as clear boundaries and expectations. (7000SS) *Marion County*



Opening hearts. Changing lives.



Jory (16)

Jory is a laid-back young man who likes to be indoors. He enjoys playing video games and watching television. Jory gets along well with others, especially when they have similar interests. He enjoys being around people.

Jory would like to be part of a small family that is loving and caring and has time to spend with him. His new family will need to be supportive as he continues to work through his grief and loss issues. He would do well in a home where he can have a structured environment and educational support. Two-parent homes with older or no other children are preferred, but single-parent homes will be considered. (7001DH) *Morgan County*



Robert (16)

Robert is a bright, articulate young man who loves playing sports. He is friendly, outgoing, and loves to be the center of attention. Robert's favorite sport is basketball and he hopes to play on a team once he joins his new family. Robert is eager to be adopted and has stated, "I want to be part of a family that loves me for who I am and enjoys doing things I like." Robert especially hopes his new parents will want to attend his school athletic events to support him when he plays. In addition to sports, Robert enjoys playing video games and spending time with friends.

Robert hopes to be part of an active two-parent family either as an only child, or with other children near his age. Robert has siblings with whom he will need to maintain contact. (7010BD) *Bartholomew County*



Da'Jaion (11) 🧑🧒

Da'Jaion has a cheerful demeanor and a contagious laugh! He enjoys playing with small toys, especially ones with lights and sound. While he cannot walk independently, Da'Jaion utilizes a wheelchair and a stander. He is able to scoot around on the floor and can cover ground pretty quickly! Da'Jaion can drink from a sippy cup and feed himself finger foods.

Da'Jaion needs a loving family that can provide 24-hour supervision and total care for him. Families with knowledge and experience with special needs children are preferred. (7016KY) *Allen County*



Look for this symbol throughout our children's pages; it indicates that they have recorded a video message. You can view their video on-line at www.adoptuskids.org/states/IN.

Zen (15)

Zen is a friendly young man with a shy smile. He describes himself as an "outdoorsy kind of person." His favorite outdoor activities include hunting, fishing, camping, and riding dirt bikes. He likes sports and enjoys both playing and watching football, basketball and baseball. Zen likes school and says his favorite subjects are math and science. He thinks he would like to join the army one day and perhaps become a weapons technician.

Zen gets along well with other children and says he would really like to have an older brother or siblings near his age. He would like to have both a mom and a dad, but is open to being part of a single-parent family as well. Because he loves the outdoors so much, Zen would love to live in a rural setting. He likes animals and would enjoy being able to have pets too.

An active family that likes outdoor activities and sports would be a good match for Zen. He will do best in a home that has structure and communicates clear boundaries and expectations. He would benefit greatly from having a strong, positive, male role model. Zen has some birth family members with whom he would like to maintain contact. (7018BS) *Knox County*



Matthew (16)

Matthew likes being outdoors and enjoys playing sports, camping, and landscaping. He is very interested in electronics and likes playing video games and being on the computer. Matthew loves music, dancing, and art. He is a big eater and he likes to cook when he has the opportunity.

Matthew would like to be part of a family. He will need a family that can provide structure and clear boundaries and expectations. He would benefit greatly from having strong, positive male role models in his life. (7027SS) *Marion County*



Nathan (13)

Nathan is a lively boy with energy to spare! Nathan is bright and inquisitive and has a good sense of humor. He likes to help others and likes to please adults. Nathan enjoys hands-on work and would do extremely well working alongside a father figure. He enjoys playing with and working with electronics. He loves the outdoors and likes fishing, biking, and camping. Nathan loves animals and likes to help care for them and play with them.

More than anything, Nathan wants to be adopted and to have a permanent family. Nathan is looking for a family that will stick by him and give him a sense of belonging. Nathan might be at his best as the youngest child in the family, or in a context where he could be the main focus. He is affectionate and responds to firm, loving boundaries and consistent discipline. Nathan has a brother with whom he will need to maintain contact. (7040BD) *Bartholomew County*



Opening hearts. Changing lives.



Emily (11) 🧒

Emily likes to go to the park and play on the swings. Her foster mother describes her as, “the sweetest little girl in the world!” Emily is unselfish and generous and likes to help others. She likes school and says her favorite subjects are reading and math. Emily likes to read, sing, and play outdoors. She wants to be a police officer when she grows up because “they are nice and they help people.”

Emily is an affectionate little girl who needs a family that can provide structure, consistent rules and consequences, support, and encouragement. Emily has siblings with whom she will need to maintain contact. (7041KY) *Allen County*



Joshuah (12) 🧒

Josh is looking forward to being part of a family that will enjoy spending time with him. He likes going to new places, playing catch, and watching television. He enjoys playing video games, wrestling, and playing outdoors. Josh also likes drawing and playing with toy cars and action figures

Although Josh would love to have a mom and a dad, he would also be open to a single-parent family. He enjoys attending church and participating in church life. Josh needs a loving family that can provide structure and close supervision. (7045KY) *Allen County*



Vince (7)

Vince is a sweet, loving little boy who likes to cuddle and play. He has a bright smile and enjoys interacting with people. Vince likes playing with musical toys, playing with puzzle shapes, and jumping on the trampoline. He is very mobile and likes to walk while holding on to things or crawl around on the floor. Vince is able to communicate using gestures and some sounds.

Vince needs a loving family that will work with him to achieve his full potential. He needs a family that can provide 24-hour care for all his basic needs. Families that have experience caring for medically fragile children are desired. (7046SS) *Marion County*

Jerome (12)

Jerome is a very likeable, easygoing young man. He is bright and does very well in school. He is active in extra-curricular activities and especially enjoys theatre and being in school plays.

Jerome is eager to be adopted and would like to have siblings if possible. He would like to be part of an African-American family says he would be most comfortable with a single mother. Jerome needs a loving, nurturing family that will support him as he deals with grief and loss issues, and also help him achieve his potential. (7048KY) *St. Joseph County*



Jasmine (13)

Jasmine is active and energetic and loves to sing and dance! She enjoys being the center of attention. Jasmine is outgoing and friendly and gets along well with other children. She likes shopping and playing with her dolls.

Jasmine wants to have a normal life and longs to be part of a family. She will need a family that will be patient and nurturing as she continues to heal from past trauma. (7051KY) *Allen County*



Morgan (15)

Though shy at first, Morgan can be very charming and friendly once she gets to know you. She likes to be active and enjoys playing sports such as volleyball and basketball. Morgan is very bright and is a good student. She likes spending time with friends, listening to music, and going to movies. She also likes playing board games, doing craft activities, and working on her scrapbook. Morgan loves animals and has even been a volunteer for the local animal shelter.

Morgan thinks she would do best with a single mom and hopes to have other children in the home near her age. She needs a family that can provide structure and understanding as she adjusts to her new home. Morgan has a sister and a grandfather with whom she will need to maintain contact. (7054MO) *Randolph County*



Opening hearts. Changing lives.



Sean (14)

Sean is a great musician and plays the trumpet. He loves being around animals, especially horses. His hobbies are stamp collecting and fishing. He also enjoys swimming and boating. Sean likes to play basketball for fun, but currently does not have a favorite basketball team. Sean's favorite food is Subway and he does not like Chinese food. Sean has an above average IQ. Sean can be very helpful, friendly, and outgoing in the right setting.

Sean would benefit from a loving, nurturing home with a strong male role model. If the family lived in the country it would be an added perk for Sean. (8004BD) *Hamilton County*



Breion (13) 🧑🏾

Breion would love to have a pet Komodo dragon, which he would name "Awesome." Breion has an active imagination and loves to create art and draw pictures. He hopes to design computer games for a living when he grows up. Breion has a very strong sense of determination and likes to be able to try new things. He would love to go surfing in California someday. Breion spends his days playing basketball and paintball, swimming, and making new friends. He also really enjoys jumping on the trampoline and shopping. Chips are his favorite thing to purchase.

Breion is an easygoing child who likes to talk, be listened to, and feel as though what he says matters. Breion would benefit from a two-parent home with a strong father figure and a structured, consistent schedule. (80061A) *Lake County*



Justin (13) 🧑🏾

Justin is very sweet-natured. He has a great sense of humor and a great smile. He loves martial arts! "Karate Kid" is his favorite movie and he will happily show off the karate moves he learned from the movie to anyone who will watch. He hopes to one day take martial arts classes. Justin takes pride in accomplishing new things. He would like to play on a softball team during the summer and he would love to learn Chinese.

Justin enjoys activities that help him grow and develop. With assistance, he is able to identify and complete tasks that he needs to complete. Justin would like to maintain contact with his brothers and current foster parents. He is very loving and caring towards his siblings and caregivers and he has a close bond with his friends and family. He hopes to have a big brother in his new home. (8008BS) *Vanderburgh County*

Sarah (14)

Sarah is friendly, outgoing, and has a good sense of humor! She likes staying busy and having her time structured. She is very social and likes to surround herself with positive people who are willing to encourage her and push her to be the best she can be. Sarah is honest and genuinely cares for others. She loves animals and thinks she might like to become a veterinarian one day. She is very creative and enjoys singing, dancing, writing poems, and creating art.

Sarah is proud of her academic achievements and hopes to be part of a family that will value her accomplishments and strive to help her increase her independent living skills. Sarah is a strong, intelligent young lady who knows what she wants and will never settle for less!
(8011KY) *St. Joseph County*



Jennifer (17)

Jennifer has a wonderful sense of humor and loves to play practical jokes. She relates well with peers and adults. Jennifer enjoys doing arts and crafts and coloring. Jennifer also likes fishing, drawing, shopping, attending movies, talking on the phone, and watching television. She is very friendly. She is shy when meeting new people, but when she becomes comfortable in social situations, she becomes talkative and engaging.

She would like to live on a farm with animals. She enjoys chores related to taking care of pets. She especially enjoys caring for bunnies and horses.

Jennifer needs a home to provide her with love and attention. (8014BD) *Jennings County*



Victor (16)

Victor has a winning smile and enjoys giving back to the community through his volunteerism. Volunteering is very important to Victor. Victor likes animals and his favorite animals are horses.

Victor enjoys being around people and plays well with children of all ages. He has many interests including, drawing, doing puzzles, taking bike rides, and participating in sporting activities. Victor likes to be active and has participated on both soccer and basketball teams. Victor likes to assist in preparing meals and his favorite food is pasta. Victor would like to be a Marine when he grows up.

Victor will do well in a two-parent or single-parent home. The family would need to be patient and flexible as this would help Victor transition into the home. Victor's family will need to be loving, stable, and supportive of Victor and his interests. (8018MO) *Delaware County*



Opening hearts. Changing lives.



Nicole (16)

Nicole is a shy, sweet, and loving girl. She takes a little while to warm up in social settings, but once she does, she is helpful and has a good sense of humor. Nicole is cooperative and well-behaved. She is a good listener and responds well to redirection.

Nicole participates on the volleyball team and is athletic. She enjoys working out and running! Her favorite subject is history and she likes to learn about it. She is very intelligent and she does well academically. Nicole is artistic and she enjoys reading, writing, drawing, and photography. She is active in her church youth group.

Nicole needs consistency, structure, and a family that likes to keep busy. She also needs a family that is committed to supporting her emotionally. She is open to all types of families, but would really thrive with a strong female role model. (8019KY) *Elkhart County*



Rosann (15)

Rosann is a very affectionate and loving child. She has a great sense of humor. She likes to play basketball and volleyball. Rosann loves to be the center of attention. She likes listening to music. She has participated in praise dancing and enjoys the youth groups at church. Extracurricular activities are important to Rosann as she enjoys being active in various community groups and school sport teams.

Rosann can initially present as shy, but friendly. She tends to get along better with either younger children or much older children.

Rosann has stated that she would like a family that is active, can play basketball with her, and is able to participate in extracurricular activities with her. She would like to have siblings. An ideal family for Rosann would need to be patient, consistent, active, and able to dedicate time to nurturing a solid relationship with Rosann. (8024KY) *Elkhart County*



Keirsten (16)

Keirsten loves sushi! She is an outgoing child with a lot of personality. She is very calm and kind. Keirsten enjoys being around people and animals and thinks she would like to be a vet or a doctor someday. She is a skilled artist and enjoys singing and playing the guitar. Soccer, volleyball, and basketball are her favorite sports to play. She also likes to read and write poetry. Keirsten enjoys camping and going on road trips. One day she would like to go to Australia to try surfing. She is not even afraid of sharks!

An ideal family for Keirsten would be either a single or two-parent family with younger children. The family should be supportive and patient and be able to provide a structured and nurturing family life. (8027BS) *Daviess County*



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Candelaria (12)

Candelaria is an energetic and happy young girl who loves to smile! She works hard in school and enjoys participating in extracurricular activities. She enjoys singing and would like to join the school choir. Candelaria has an interest in fashion and likes to go shopping. She would also like to join 4-H and other events that involve crafting. Candelaria attends church and youth group weekly. Candelaria's Christian faith is important to her. She hopes to continue attending church, as she finds it fulfilling and enjoys the social interaction.

An ideal home for Candelaria would be a two-parent home with younger or older children. Additionally the family would need to be supportive, patient, nurturing, and be able to provide stability and opportunities for her to continue with her school activities, hobbies, and social interests. (80291A) *Newton County*



Brenna (15)

Brenna is extremely friendly and outgoing. She smiles and laughs often. Brenna is a bright, energetic, and highly intelligent child. She enjoys reading and watching movies. She also loves to spend time outdoors and learning about nature. Brenna has an active and creative imagination. She is active in the school choir and loves to sing. She does well in school and interacts well with her teachers and peers. Brenna is passionate about animals and their wellbeing. Brenna has expressed interest in becoming a veterinarian when she is older.

Brenna would benefit being placed with a couple or a single-parent home with older or younger children. The family would need to be patient, supportive, encouraging, and nurturing. Brenna has a half-brother who is very important to her and she would need to maintain contact with him on a regular basis. (8031DH) *Montgomery County*



Jose (15)

Jose is polite and friendly. He is a great speller and does well in school. He likes to play video games, construction games, and do puzzles. Jose likes to help around the house doing chores like making his bed, cleaning his room, taking out the trash, and cooking. He has expressed interest in working on cars and would like to be a mechanic when he is older. Jose likes dogs and enjoys watching "Animal Planet." His favorite colors are blue, red, green, and orange. Jose's favorite foods are meatloaf and spaghetti. His favorite places to eat are Red Lobster and Golden Corral. He likes country music and going fishing.

Jose would thrive in a two parent home that is able to provide structure, affection, and stability. The family would need to be clear with their expectations and be very consistent. It would be beneficial for Jose to be the youngest in the family or to be in a home with no other children. (8032SS) *Marion County*



Opening hearts. Changing lives.



Dakota (15)

Dakota is an intelligent, athletic teenage boy with a good sense of humor. He is very competitive and enjoys playing basketball and with his yo-yo. Dakota also likes to lift weights and play video games. His favorite holiday is Christmas. Math is his favorite subject in school. He has expressed interest in being an astronaut or a Harlem Globetrotter when he is older. Dakota appreciates different types of art and music, especially rap music. Action and adventure movies are Dakota's favorite movies to watch.

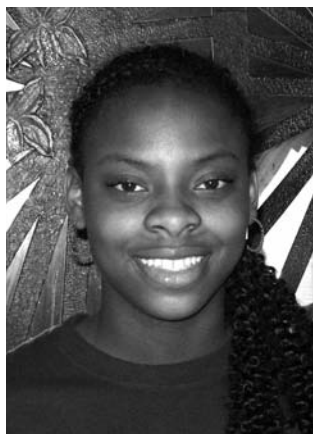
Dakota will be most successful in a two-parent home with no other children in the home. He needs a family who will challenge him intellectually and who will provide him with consistency, structure, and a sense of security. Dakota desires to be a part of a family who has family values and routines, such as eating together at the table. (8034DH) *Montgomery County*



Daniel (12)

Daniel loves to go fishing, ride his bike, and play outside! He has a lot of energy and loves all things outdoors. He likes to go camping with his foster family, climb trees, swim, and build forts. He is a very bright little boy and likes reading, playing video games, and learning about sharks. Daniel is very creative and has a talent for drawing. He has a big heart and is very friendly. Daniel loves animals and would enjoy having a dog.

Daniel would do well in a loving home that can provide encouragement, structure, and clear boundaries and expectations. Daniel will need to maintain contact with his brother. (8038MO) *Jefferson County*



Mercedes (13)

Mercedes loves to dress fashionably. She also loves to stay active. She takes any opportunity to interact with peers, whether it is with sports or in youth group. She loves to read and watch movies. She is soft-spoken and a bit shy, but she loves to smile and enjoys being around people her age.

Mercedes will need a home that can provide role models, stability, activity, acceptance, and extra support with her educational needs. She needs a family that will encourage her and teach her how to do unfamiliar things. She has siblings with whom she would like to remain in contact. Both single-parent and two-parent families will be considered. (8046KY) *St. Joseph County*

Cassie (12)

Cassie likes to stay busy! She spends her time playing baseball, doing science homework, and shopping for clothes and jewelry. Her favorite color is purple and she likes to eat at Golden Corral. When she grows up, she would like to be a singer. Until then, she would just like to go to movies, amusement parks, and a Justin Bieber concert.

Cassie needs a faithful family that will help her with accountability and guidance. She would do well in a two-parent or single-parent home where she can be the youngest child. Cassie would like to live in the city, but more importantly, she has stated that she wants a place to call home. (8051KY) *Allen County*



Kristian (10)

Kristian loves penguins, lions, BBQ, meatballs, cheesy potatoes, baseball, and the colors blue and green. He would like to be a police officer or work in an ambulance some day. He loves to play Xbox, ride mopeds, and play with toys. He especially likes Harley building kits. Baseball is his favorite sport. He also enjoys attending and singing along at church. He is silly, funny, active, and an especially good listener.

Kristian would do well in a family that can provide a highly structured environment, clear expectations, and encouragement regarding his education. Single-parent and two-parent homes will be considered. (8052MO) *Delaware County*



Perry (11)

Perry has a great sense of humor and is a very compassionate individual. He is thoughtful and caring and loves to help those in need. He enjoys reading as well as playing with Legos, remote control cars, and video games. He is good at puzzles and he enjoys drawing. He likes soft-spoken people who share his compassion for people who have disabilities. He hopes to take piano lessons and also own a cell phone someday.

Perry would do well in a home where he is the only child. He needs a social family that can provide attention, stability, positive discipline, affection, guidance, and someone to be an advocate for his educational needs. (8055SS) *Vigo County*



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Taylor (16)

Taylor is a bright girl with a great attitude! She has a natural charisma and is friendly and outgoing. She converses easily with others and is creative, talented, intelligent, athletic, and resilient. She loves to learn new things and she has a good sense of humor. She likes to keep a journal and loves to be active.

Taylor needs a nurturing, stable family that is wholeheartedly committed to her on a long-term basis. She needs a family that can provide lots of supervision and support. A single mother or two-parent home that can provide clear expectations, consistent discipline, and structure would be best for Taylor. (8061KY) *St. Joseph County*



Chris (17)

Chris is a laid-back, shy, and imaginative child who likes to play video games, color, and watch movies. He also likes to shop for shoes and video games. Chris loves playing with action figures, telling jokes, and playing independently. His favorite thing about himself is that he is very good at spelling. Chris would like a room of his own and would love to have a dog or a turtle. His favorite kind of dog is a Great Dane and if he had one, he would name it Scooby Doo after his favorite cartoon.

Chris has stated that if he could have a family, he would not mind siblings as long as he will not be forgotten. He is hopeful for his future, but may take extra time to bond since he is quite shy. The ideal family for Chris would enjoy the indoors as much as he does. They would need to be very patient, nurturing, and consistent with their routine. Two-parent homes or single-parent homes with a strong support system will be preferred. His new family should be willing to commit to his emotional health and educational needs. (8065DH) *Howard County*



Brandon (12) 🐹

Brandon is a charming and fun-loving child. He likes to play basketball, football, and baseball. He prefers to be outdoors and loves going to parks to ride bikes, skateboard, or go for walks. Brandon would like to be a truck driver someday because he likes to travel. If he could pick a place to go on a vacation, he would choose Georgia. He also hopes to have a pet gerbil at his new home.

Brandon needs a family that will provide structure for him and understand how to best meet his educational and emotional needs. He would do well in a two-parent home with older siblings. (8067MO) *Jay County*



Look for this symbol throughout our children's pages; it indicates that they have recorded a video message. You can view their video on-line at www.adoptuskids.org/states/IN.

Caleb (13)

Caleb is a very loyal friend. He makes friends easily and he enjoys telling jokes and making other people laugh. He is compassionate and caring and will defend those he feels are being mistreated. Caleb enjoys video games and watching movies. He has a desire to succeed in life and works hard to achieve his goals. He would like to be an astronaut someday.

Caleb would like to have older siblings. He would prefer to live with a single mother who is African-American, but two-parent homes will be considered as well. He needs a patient family that understands the importance of healing and will advocate for his education. He needs love, stability, and a sense of security. He would do well in a structured environment with firm boundaries. (8070BS) *Vanderburgh County*



Precious (13)

Precious is quiet, artistic, and very funny. She enjoys writing fictional stories and writing in her journal. She loves to listen to music and she enjoys drawing and making crafts. Precious hopes to one day visit Jamaica because it looks beautiful and she thinks she would enjoy the weather there. She also hopes to have her own room at her new home.

Precious would do well with an active family that can provide nurturing, structure, and consistency. She would like to live in the city and have a mom and a dad, siblings, and pets. Her new family will need to be able to provide appropriate supervision and give Precious time to adjust to a new environment. (8072BD) *Clark County*



Nicole (16)

Nicole finds the humor in situations rather than dwelling on the negative. She is very outgoing and funny. She has a great personality and enjoys laughing and making others laugh. Nicole can crochet baby blankets and she has played drums in the past. She enjoys reading and she likes to write poetry. If she could choose a place to vacation, she would visit Portland, Maine. Nicole loves to dance, especially to country or hip-hop music, and she hopes to one day play softball on a team.

Nicole will need a home where the family is active and able to provide appropriate nurturing, structure, and consistency. She needs supervision and clear boundaries, as well as a family that is patient while she adjusts to a new environment. She would do well in a family that has a good understand of teenagers who have experienced trauma and loss. Single-parent and two-parent homes will be considered. (8073BD) *Clark County*



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Malachi (14)

Malachi is an athletic and creative young man. He has great coordination, especially when playing sports or video games. His favorite sport is soccer, but he also really enjoys basketball and football. He plays the violin well, but does not enjoy practicing. He has a great sense of humor, is strong-willed and determined, and loves a good challenge.

Malachi would do well in a family where he can have a strong male role model, preferably one that is fully involved with children and sports. Malachi wants a father to take him to ball games and actively support him in his activities. He would love a home that has a basketball goal outside. Two-parent families are preferred. (8074KY) *Elkhart County*



Bailey (13) 🧑

Bailey has a fun and vibrant personality! She makes friends easily and loves to ask questions and learn new things. She wants to be a nurse in the neonatal care unit someday because she would love to work with babies. Her favorite colors are purple and pink and she loves Justin Bieber, Selena, and Taylor Lautner. "Creative and funny" are the words she uses to describe herself. She loves to do hair, make beaded bracelets, and eat Oreo McFlurries!

Bailey would like to live in a two-parent home with a mom and a dad and maybe younger siblings because she loves to help care for young children. She will need a home that can provide one-on-one attention. (8080BD) *Jackson County*

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What is Adoption?

Adoption is meant to establish a legally recognized, lifelong relationship between a parent and child who are not parent/child related biologically. The adoptive parent(s) becomes legally and morally responsible for the child's safety, education, health care, value development, development of life skills, as well as the day-to-day care of that child.

Our society acknowledges that the man and woman who biologically create a life are traditionally the ones responsible for the child. Our society created adoption as a means to meet the needs of children whose biological parents are not able to assume the responsibilities of parenting.

Originally, adoption laws were based on "ownership"-type principles and focused on the rights of adults. However, over time, laws have become much more focused on meeting the emotional, physical, spiritual and developmental needs of the child.

In the past, the two people who biologically gave them life raised most children. This is no longer the case in our country. Today, single parents, grandparents, stepparents, foster parents or other parents acting as guardian are parenting a majority of children. Many children are now experiencing what it is like to have multiple sets of parents, grandparents and extended families. It is common for a child to experience a series of adults functioning in parental roles in their family.

Children who are adopted always have at least two sets of parents. For these children to be able to understand who they are, it is important for them to come to know, at some level, each of the parents who have had a part in creating the life they are living. All children try to make sense of these complex relationships. The more they know about the people to whom they have had any type of parental tie, the more successful they will be at developing a more complete picture of themselves.

According to Vera Fahlberg, a child and family expert and author, we can divide the parenting role in a child's life into three parts. Part One, ***the Biological Aspect of Parenting***, gives life itself to a child. The biological parent also determines the sex of the child, eye color, hair color and texture, intellectual potential, temperament, potential talents as well as some of the medical conditions that may surface as the child develops. Racial and ethnic heritage are also determined by the biological factors.

Part Two, ***the Legal Aspect of Parenting***, is financially responsible for the child. It is the legal parent's responsibility to keep the child

safe and secure. The legal parent makes all important decisions for the child, for instance, deciding where the child will live, what school the child will attend, what medical care is given, etc. This parent is also legally and financially responsible for the child's actions.

Part Three, ***the Parenting Aspect of Parenting***, sees to the day-to-day care of the child. This parent is responsible for providing love and discipline. This parent models behavior for the child to copy. This is the person who cooks meals, washes clothes, helps with school work, takes care of the ill child, watches the child's ball game etc. This person is the child's primary educator who teaches values, religion, and most life skills.

For any child, it would be much easier to understand life if the same one or two people filled all three of these parental roles throughout the child's entire life. For many children, and all adopted children, multiple people are involved. Most children are able to do quite well with multiple "parents" as long as transitions are handled appropriately and the child has someone to talk with about the changes. In fact, many very successful adults credit their success to having had many parent models and mentors along the way.

Circumstances and the legal system may change who provides two of these three parts of parenting to a particular child. However, circumstances and the legal system cannot change the biological connection. **The child's bonds to the biological parents are permanent and important to whom that child is as a person.** Anyone planning to adopt a child needs to recognize and value this fact.

Recognizing this is the only way that you will be able to understand the identity questions that the child will wrestle with as he or she grows and matures. The adoptive parent, who assumes both the role of legal parent and parenting parent for their adoptive child, can help them reach their highest potential by helping the child deal with such issues.

In a legal sense, people become a member of a family in one of three ways: by birth, by marriage or by adoption. "Family" is defined in our legal structure as two or more people who: 1)

have biological ties; or 2) make a long-term legally binding commitment to each other.

When entering a family by birth, the child shares genetics as well as cultural and ethnic heritage with others in the family.

When entering a family through adoption or marriage, family members blend themselves emotionally with another person or persons who usually differ in genetics and heritage. There generally is no biological tie. However, governments and societies

have developed ways to recognize the great importance and permanence of such deep, emotional commitments.

Laws, regulations and practices have been developed to give persons related by adoption and marriage comparable rights and responsibilities as those related by birth. Our society expects all families, whether formed by birth, adoption or marriage, to be permanent connections that offer love, acceptance and support for all members.

How Do I Start The Adoption Process in Indiana?

The Adoption Process for a child who is a ward of Indiana requires the supervision of the Department of Child Services. The process begins with Family Preparation and parents are required to attend educational workshops and complete a Family Preparation Assessment, sometimes called a Home Study. You can learn more about the process in another section of this book. Prospective Adoptive parents must be recommended to the Indiana Adoption Program after their Family Preparation is complete and approved.

You will be given the contact information of those in your community responsible for helping you with Family Preparation and your contact information will be submitted to your local Training Coordinator and to your local county Department of Child Services. The Training Coordinator will send you a schedule and they may contact you about registering for the educational workshops. You can also choose to contact your community agencies.

If you have an approved Family Preparation Assessment or Home Study from the Indiana Department of Child Services and want more information on a child introduced in the Picture Book, contact the Indiana Adoption Program. You will be given the contact information for the child and your contact

information will be submitted to the child's social worker and Special Needs Adoption Specialist.

We encourage you to contact the Indiana Adoption Program first in order to ensure that you communicate to the proper individuals responsible for any child featured in this book

To begin to inquire about Family Preparation contact the Indiana Adoption Program:

Call 1-888-25-ADOPT or e-mail at
snap@childrensbureau.org

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How to Adopt Overview

The information below provides an overview of the steps involved in adopting a child from the foster care system. This information has been reprinted in part from the National Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC) and can be read in more detail on their website at www.nacac.org or at www.adoptachild.in.gov.

Step 1: Educate Yourself about Adoption

Where Do I Start Learning?

Ask adoptive parents where they started their adoption journey and you will get many answers. For some their process began with reading a newspaper or magazine article. Maybe they found adoption material on the Internet. They may have checked out a book on adoption from their local library. Others may have known someone who had already adopted and talked with them about expectations and what steps to take. Others may have looked in the phone book for adoption agencies in their area, then called and received basic information, either on the phone or in the mail.

The more information you have, the better choices you can make for yourself and your children-to-be. Individuals must choose for themselves when and how to gather the information they need.

National Adoption Organizations

The National Adoption Information Clearinghouse (NAIC) publishes a wide variety of adoption fact sheets, many of which are free or very inexpensive. It also provides information about state and federal adoption laws, and tracks upcoming adoption conferences. NAIC's web site includes a searchable collection of adoption-related articles and report abstracts, as well as a directory of more than 5,700 public and private adoption agencies, support groups, and government officials. To learn more, contact:

NAIC

330 C St. S.W.
Washington, DC 20447
888-251-0075 or 703-352-3488
fax: 703-385-3206
e-mail: NAIC@calib.com
web: www.childwelfare.gov

North American Council on Adoptable Children

This national organization offers information and resources to support adoption of children from the foster care system. They host a national conference each year for adoptive families and families waiting to adopt.

970 Raymond Avenue, Suite 106
St. Paul, MN 55114
phone: 651-644-3036
fax: 651-644-9848
e-mail: info@nacac.org

Adoption Conferences

Many national, regional, and local groups hold annual adoption conferences with workshops geared toward new or prospective adoptive parents.

- Some publishers and booksellers produce or market many child welfare and adoption-related materials. Some of the best known include:

Written Materials

Child Welfare League of America

440 First St. N.W., 3rd Floor
Washington, DC 20001-2085
202-638-2952 • fax: 202-638-4004
web: www.cwla.org/pubs/welcome.htm
Headquarters
2395 Crystal Dr., Suite 250
Arlington, VA 22202
Phone: 703-412-2400 • fax: 703-412-2401

Tapestry Books

P.O. Box 651
Ringoes, NJ 08551
877-266-5406 • fax: 609-737-5951
e-mail: info@tapestrybooks.com
web: www.tapestrybooks.com

- Your phone book. Adoption agencies, advocates, attorneys, support groups, and more can be found listed in the Yellow Pages under "Adoption."
- Use your public library. Most libraries now have online access so you can use the Internet, find listings of periodicals, and do inter-library transfers. A wealth of free information can be located through these means.
- Your home computer can be a gateway to adoption information. The Internet has no shortage of information about adoption.

Self Assessment

Children don't need perfect parents, just one or two individuals willing to meet the unique challenges of parenting and make a lifetime commitment to caring for and nurturing their children. One of the advantages of special needs adoption is that almost any responsible adult can become an adoptive parent. Prospective parents do not have to be rich, married, under 40, highly educated, or homeowners to adopt. Far more important are personal characteristics like:

- a belief in adoption and an ability to commit
- patience and perseverance
- a good sense of humor and talent for keeping life in perspective
- a love of children and parenting
- the ability to roll with unexpected changes, stresses, and challenges
- the ability to deal with rejection without taking it personally
- the ability to accept without judging
- tolerance and understanding for your child's conflicting feelings and your own
- an awareness that healing doesn't come quickly, all wounds cannot be healed, and your child may not attach to your family
- the strength to be consistent and set limits
- a willingness to learn new parenting techniques and advocate for your children's educational and medical needs
- resourcefulness

If you have all or most of those qualities, then ask yourself these questions:

- Do I clearly understand why I want to adopt?
- If applicable — do my partner and I work as a team? Are we both committed to adoption?
- If applicable — have I talked with my own children and considered their feelings?
- Does my lifestyle allow me the time necessary to meet the needs of a special child?

Think carefully about your answers to these questions. You may decide to pursue a different type of adoption, consider foster care, or realize that adoption really is not for you. Take the time to make a good decision, because it is a decision you and your adoptive child will live with for life.

In addition, before seriously contemplating special needs adoption, prospective parents must honestly evaluate their desire and ability to successfully parent children who have troubling pasts and uncertain futures. Many children who become available for adoption at older ages have not received the early care that kids need to develop a strong sense of security, trust, and self-esteem. Many also suffer from conditions caused by past trauma, or prenatal exposure to alcohol or drugs. Children whose backgrounds include traumatic experiences, abuse, and/or neglect may exhibit symptoms of distress such as:

- aggressiveness
- attachment disorders
- attention deficits and hyperactivity
- bed wetting
- defiance
- depression
- impulsiveness
- learning disabilities
- low self-esteem
- lying
- poor peer relationships/social skills

Fortunately, through therapy, medication, and consistent care, children can overcome or at least better cope with many of these challenges.

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Most children put their new adoptive parents through a period of testing to see if the parents are truly committed or just waiting for an excuse to desert the child as others have done before. To improve your chances of successfully adopting a child who has special needs, be prepared to offer a home environment that combines extra love, support, and attention with clear structure and consistent limit-setting. Parents should also be ready to actively advocate for their child at school, with peers, and within the community. It can be immensely helpful for parents to have a support network or belong to an adoptive parent support group.

Step 2: Decide What Type of Adoption You Want to Pursue

Even if you already know that you want to adopt a child who has special needs, you still need to make a number of choices about your adoption. Most importantly, you need to decide what type of child you are willing to bring into your family. What disabilities and challenges (physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral) can you comfortably handle? What age range, background, and ethnicity would fit best within your household and community? Are you open to helping your adopted child maintain contact with some of his or her birth relatives? Can you welcome a group of two or more siblings into your home?

Next, you might want to consider whether you would rather work through a public or a private adoption agency. Though most children who have special needs become available for adoption through the public foster care system, both public and private agencies can help you locate a child or sibling group to adopt.

Step 3: Investigate Ways to Cover Adoption Expenses

Many agencies do not charge service fees to families who adopt children from the foster care system. However, you will need a home study, and because adoption is a legal process, you may need an attorney. The cost of a home study can vary from \$0 to \$3,000. Attorney fees and court costs can range from \$2,000 to \$5,000, and special needs adoptive families often incur additional costs for medical services, counseling, etc. — costs that may continue throughout the child's lifetime. Fortunately, due to federal and employer-initiated programs, parents have several options for covering the cost of special needs adoption.

Employer Assistance

Employers who offer adoption benefits may provide workers with:

- direct cash assistance for adoption expenses
- reimbursement of approved adoption expenses
- paid or unpaid leave (beyond federal leave requirements established through the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993)
- resource and referral services

To request a list of employers who provide adoption benefits or learn more about employer provided adoption benefits, contact: Adoption Benefits Coordinator, National Adoption Center, 1500 Walnut Street, Suite 701, Philadelphia, PA 19102; 800-TO-ADOPT or 215-735-9988.

Tax Credits and Exclusions

For tax years beginning 2008–2009 the adoption or credit has increased. See form 8839, "Qualified Adoption Expenses" and its instructions for more information. Check the Internal Revenue Services website at www.irs.gov and look under Forms & Publications.

Adoption Subsidies

If you adopt a child who has special needs, he or she may be eligible for federal adoption assistance. Adoption assistance payments are designed to help offset the short- and long-term costs associated with adopting children who need special services. Children who are wards may be eligible for adoption assistance benefits if they meet specific eligibility guidelines. Ask your child's Family Case Manager about the child eligibility for subsidies.

Indiana Adoption Subsidy

The new adoption subsidy guidelines can be found on the Department of Child Services website. Go to www.in.gov/dcs — when you look at the page, on the left-hand side are tabs. Go to the pull-down arrow of Policies and click on Child Welfare policies. When you get to that page you will see a list of Policy Changes via Administrative Letters. About 3/4 of the way down, you will find an Administrative Letter from Director Payne, titled "Indiana Adoption Program" and it has a January 2009 date. The letter is 15 pages long and outlines the entire subsidy program.

Step 4: Select an Adoption Agency

How to Find Agencies

To find as many agencies to choose from as possible, consider several of the options listed below:

- The Indiana Adoption Program is coordinated through the County Department of Child Services (CDCS) and private Licensed Child Placing Agencies (LCPA) that are contracted with the local counties to provide adoption services, including Family Preparation. You can contact the Indiana Adoption Program at 1-888-25-ADOPT or view a list of SNAP Specialists at <http://www.in.gov/dcs/2747.htm> for agency information in your area.
- Look in the Yellow Pages under “Adoption” or “Social Services” for private adoption agencies. If you live in a small town, you may want to check in a phone book from a larger community nearby.
- Contact adoptive parent support groups or adoptive parents for suggestions. Both are a great source of information about agencies and adoption, plus they are usually eager to share what they know with prospective adopters. To find an adoptive parent support group in your area contact your local county DCS to see if they know of one or use the Internet to search. Support groups are generally very informal and you may need to ask people in your community who have adopted to find out if a group meets near you.

Finding the Right Agency for You

To find a public or private agency that is a good fit for you, your beliefs and values, and your unique situation, compare information from several different agencies. Most will gladly provide details about their services and requirements upon request. Before selecting an agency, take the initiative to interview agency representatives by phone or in person to learn more about them. You may want to ask:

- Who can adopt from the agency?
- What kinds of children does the agency place (ages, backgrounds, etc.)?
- Does the agency work with the foster care system or is it exclusively a private adoption agency?
- Where do the agency’s children come from, and how many are legally free for adoption?
- How long, on average, must one wait for a child? What is the time lapse between application and placement?

- How much does a completed adoption cost-in total and part by part?
- What are the assessment or home study requirements?
- What services — such as parenting classes, support group activities, access to therapy and counseling, and respite care — will the agency provide before and after a child is placed in your home?
- Can the agency provide references from parents who recently adopted from the agency?

Step 5: Let Your Agency Know You Are Serious about Adopting

When you call an agency to let staff there know you are interested in adopting, the person you talk to may ask a series of screening questions or simply volunteer to send literature about the agency. If you want to adopt relatively soon, find out how you can get the process started.

One common first step is an orientation meeting or training session for prospective adoptive parents. At the meeting or training you will likely:

- meet social workers and learn about policies and practices regarding adoption
- learn what types of children are available for adoption through the agency
- learn about foster care
- be asked to examine your feelings about adoption, and judge if adoption is the right choice for you
- gain insight into the challenges and rewards of adoptive parenting
- obtain application materials

Step 6: Adoption Application

The application process may be different between private agencies and those agencies (LCPA) that contract with the DCS for the Indiana Adoption Program. If you are adopting a child who is in foster care, you may need to attend several of the educational workshops before you begin the application or Family Preparation process.

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If you find that the application process is hard to understand, ask the agency or another adoptive parent for help. Don't let the challenges of completing forms keep you from pursuing adoption.

Find out how long it will take for the agency to process your application once you have completed the forms. Ask when you should next expect to hear from the agency, and how you can schedule and prepare for an assessment or home study.

Step 7: Attend Adoption and Parenting Classes

Public agencies commonly require pre-placement training to acquaint prospective parents with issues that can arise after a child or sibling group is placed with them. School-aged adoptees bring not only unique special needs, but also a history of life experiences that will affect interactions with adoptive parents, new siblings, schoolmates, and others. Issues related to disability, culture, early abuse, and a child's birth family should all be discussed before a child is placed in your home.

Prospective adoptive parents who want to be approved to adopt children through the Indiana Adoption Program must complete 26 hours of adoption preparation training in scheduled workshops. Pre-Adoption Training is scheduled through your local Training Coordinator. To find out who the Training Coordinator is in your area contact the Indiana Adoption Program.

Step 8: Begin the Family Preparation Process

The Family Preparation process can loosely be defined as an educational process designed to help your social worker learn more about your ability to parent and provide a stable home, to teach you about adoption and its effect on children and families, and to prepare you to parent a child whose experiences and history are very different from your own. Everyone who hopes to adopt must have a completed Family Preparation Assessment, also called a home study. Depending on the agency, the worker, and the prospective parents' cooperation, the process can take anywhere from two months to a year.

Items You May Need for a Family Preparation Assessment (Home Study)

Specific requirements for assessments or home studies vary by agency, so be sure to ask for a list of the items and information your agency needs. The following items are commonly required during the assessment process:

- an autobiographical statement — a statement you create about your life history
- certified copies of birth certificates for you, your partner, and any children
- a certified copy of your marriage license
- certified copies of divorce decrees
- the death certificate of a former spouse
- certified copies of the finalization or adoption decrees for any adopted children
- child abuse and criminal record clearances, or a notarized statement from the police declaring that you and your partner have faced no felony convictions
- income verification (may include tax returns, W-2 forms, and paycheck stubs)
- a statement of health provided by a physician, which might include lab test results or a statement of infertility
- written references from friends, employers, neighbors, etc.

At some point in the process, you may also need to pay for the home study. The cost through a public agency may be quite low or even free; other agencies typically charge between \$500 and \$2,000 for a completed study.

Questions You May Be Asked

During Family Preparation meetings with your worker, you can expect to answer questions about your background, your education, your job history, your marriage, your leisure activities, your religion (particularly for religiously affiliated agencies), and your experiences with children. For instance, the worker may ask:

- What is your family like? How will you integrate your new child into your family?
- How will your extended family treat an adopted child?
- How is your marriage? How do you make decisions, resolve conflicts, and express your feelings?

- Why do you want to adopt?
- What is your home like? Are there places for your child to play or spend time alone?
- What is your neighborhood like?
- How do you plan to address discipline issues with your new child?
- What was your family like when you were growing up? How were you raised? Are you close to your parents?
- Where do you work? Is your schedule flexible enough to accommodate the responsibilities that come with parenting?
- What sort of child care arrangements will you make for your child?

The aim of any assessment or home study is to help the agency locate the best home for each child it places, and make good matches between prospective parents and children. If you have questions about the process, ask your social worker or agency.

Step 9: Begin Searching for a Child

If you adopt through the Indiana Adoption Program, you are urged to complete training and your Family Preparation process before you begin searching for a child. It may take several months for you to complete the process and become approved to adopt, so a child that you see listed in the Picture Book now may not be available several months from now.

The children are listed in the Picture Book by their first name, followed by an identification number. The last two letters of the identification number are the initials for the SNAP specialist for the child. The SNAPs and their contact information can be found on the back inside cover of the Picture Book.

If you adopt through a private agency, learn how the agency will conduct a search. What criteria do they use to match children with families? Are they willing to search outside your immediate area for a child? If you learn of a child in another state, will the agency pursue the child for you?

Step 10: Considering a Child

Before agreeing to accept any child or sibling group for adoption, learn as much as you can about the child — including prenatal care and exposure to drugs or alcohol, birth parents' medical

histories, attachments to foster families or other relatives, foster care placements, relationships with siblings, interests and talents, etc. Most agencies want adoptive parents to get to know children before agreeing to adopt. If the child has certain medical conditions or other disabilities, decide if your family is prepared to address issues that may arise from the child's situation.

If you agree to adopt and accept placement of a child whose birth parents' rights have not been voluntarily surrendered or involuntarily terminated (known as a legal-risk placement), you must accept the chance that the child could be returned to his or her birth parents. Until birth parents' rights are terminated, the child cannot legally become a member of your family and must instead stay in your home as a foster child.

Questions for Prospective Adoptive Parents to Ask

- a. What is known about the child's birth history?
- b. What is known about the child's developmental history — physically, mentally, emotionally and socially?
- c. Is there any evidence of handicap? Any suspected learning difficulties?
- d. When was last contact with any birth family member?
- e. Are there pictures the birth family can pass on, or any family memento?
- f. Is there a Life Book for the child?
- g. Are there any siblings? Will it be possible or beneficial for ongoing contact with siblings (if they have been separated)?
- h. What social and medical history is available on the parents? On extended family members or siblings?
- i. Do the parents have a history of drug or alcohol abuse? Was the mother using substances during the pregnancy?
- j. What was the home environment like? What was the environment of the foster home(s) like?
- k. How many moves or placements did the child experience and why did they occur?
- l. What is the child's current adjustment status?
- m. Has the child been prepared for the adoptive placement? How can you help?
- n. What is the child's current health status? Does the child have any allergies?

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- o. Is there any history of physical, sexual or emotional abuse? What treatment has been pursued?
- p. What method of discipline works best with the child?
- q. Does the child accept and give affection?
- r. Does the child have any therapeutic needs or treatment plans?
- s. What adoption subsidy options are there for the child?

Step 11: Prepare for Your Child's Arrival

Anticipate how the addition of a new family member will affect your life and plan accordingly. Depending on your situation and the child you adopt, you may need to:

- Update the family's insurance. Adoptees can be covered under your health insurance from the date they are placed with your family. Group health insurance carriers must insure adoptees under the terms of their parents' policy and cannot deny coverage due to pre-existing conditions. Add a child to your health insurance plan within 30 days after he or she is placed in your home. If your child is eligible for an adoption subsidy, he or she may be covered through Medicaid. Also change beneficiary designations on life insurance policies and update wills as needed.
- Get and keep a copy of the adoption decree with the child's amended birth certificate. Once the adoption is finalized, that document may be sealed and neither you nor the adoptee can access it. Without it, some adoptees have had trouble getting passports and other official documents. With it, adoptees may have an easier time searching for their biological roots, if and when they decide to do so.
- Prepare to get a new social security card and birth certificate for your child that recognizes the child's new last name and family situation. To claim your child as a dependent for tax purposes, the child must have a social security number.
- Learn as much as you can about the child's habits and personality. Talk to the child's foster parents and worker so you can learn information that will help ease the child's transition into your family. What are the child's favorite foods and games? What is the best way to comfort the child?

- Keep items that tie to the child's past. Encourage the child to bring all his possessions from previous homes, and ask the foster parents and workers for copies of any pictures they have of the child. Never throw away broken toys or worn out clothes unless the child wants to. Familiar objects and smells are comforting, and the child needs you to respect that he has a past and prior attachments and loyalties.
- Make your house child-friendly. Reposition or remove household objects that could be dangerous to your new child. Prepare the child's room to make it welcoming and to signal that the area belongs to him or her.
- Inform your other children about changes that will occur. Tell your children how their roles may change when the new child arrives. Prepare them to share, adjust schedules, and withhold judgment during the transition. Include everyone in visits and trial weekends before the child is placed, and establish clear ground rules for behavior, interaction, and discipline.
- Negotiate an adoption assistance agreement. Parents who adopt an eligible child with special needs from a public or private agency can receive federal or state benefits for their child. Ask your agency what steps you must take to obtain a subsidy and negotiate an adoption assistance agreement, including any post-adoptive services and subsidies.

Step 12: The Child is Placed in Your Home

If you adopt a younger child, you may need to find day care. If you adopt an older child, you may need to enroll him or her in school; arrange for therapy, counseling, or tutoring; and identify respite care options. You might also want to join an adoptive parent support group.

Children who are placed for adoption through public agencies may move in with an adoptive family as soon as the parents complete required pre-placement visits and are approved to adopt-provided the timing is not unnecessarily disruptive to the child's schooling or other activities.

When a new child is placed in your home, you will assume temporary legal custody. For a few months, while your family undergoes the inevitable adjustment period, your agency will monitor how the placement is proceeding.

The monitoring period typically lasts about six months to a year. During this time, the worker may call or visit to assess how you and your new child are adjusting, and to answer questions. If all goes well, at the end of the monitoring period the agency will recommend to the court that the adoption be approved.

Step 13: File a Petition to Adopt

An adoption petition is the document filed in court that initiates the legal aspect of adoption. Through the petition, adoptive parents formally request permission to adopt a specific child. To file a petition you will likely need the following information and documentation:

- the child's birth certificate or birth date and place of birth
- a written statement that confirms your desire and suitability to adopt, as well as your ability to provide financially for the child
- a written declaration that the adoption is in the child's best interest
- your name, age, and address
- the date on which and from whom you received custody of the child
- a statement of the legal reason why the birth parents' rights are being (or have been) terminated
- a disclosure of any relationship that you share with the child (other than as an adoptive parent) — such as being the child's aunt, grandparent, or stepparent

Step 14: Finalize the Adoption

Your adoption is not legally complete until your newly created family goes through the finalization process. Finalization hearings usually take place within a year after a child is placed in the home. Before scheduling a hearing, check with your agency to make sure you have completed the necessary paperwork. If you are missing required documents, the finalization could be delayed.

The finalization hearing is a judicial proceeding, sometimes held in the judge's chambers, during which adoptive parents are granted permanent legal custody of their adopted child. The hearing, which usually lasts only 30 to 60 minutes, is designed to establish the legality of the new family unit, and confirm that

the adoptive parents are willing and able to provide for their new child.

Who Should Attend the Hearing

The following individuals generally attend the finalization hearing:

- the adoptive parents and adoptee(s)
- the adoptive family's lawyer
- the agency social worker who placed the child with the adoptive parents

What the Hearing Involves

To verify that the adoption should take place, the court will attempt to establish that the child has been placed in a safe, loving home. Expect to list all the identifying information included in your adoption petition and answer questions such as:

- Why do you want to adopt?
- How will you care for your new child?
- How will your family adjust to a new child?
- Is there anything the court should know before finalizing this adoption?

As soon as the judge signs the adoption order, you gain permanent legal custody of your child. Finalization is the last formal step in the adoption process and marks the official beginning of your new family. From this point, learn as much as you can about post-adoption services (like respite care, support groups, etc.) that can help you make the most of your new role as an adoptive parent.

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Common Challenges of Children With Special Needs

Children in the Indiana Adoption Program are often considered to have “special needs.” Special Needs can mean different things to people. The Adoption Program has been referred to as a Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP) and the regional representative coordinating the adoption process for a child is called a SNAP Specialist.

Special Needs are the unique challenges each child faces and will require parents to assist them in their childhood development and schooling in a knowledgeable way. Special Needs can describe physical disabilities, medical conditions, emotional difficulties and developmental issues.

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Abuse

Many of the children, regardless of their age, in the Indiana Adoption Program have experienced abuse. This can mean physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or any combination of these types of trauma. Abuse generally leaves its mark with behavioral problems, physical impairments and therapeutic needs that require the attention of parents and professionals working together to benefit the child’s future development.

Attachment

This term describes a child’s ability to form relationships. Children who have been abused, neglected, or have experienced disruptions in significant relationships may face challenges in creating new relationships.

Attachment Disorder

An attachment disorder is a condition in which children have difficulty forming loving, lasting close relationships. Attachment disorders vary in severity, but the term is usually reserved for those who show a nearly complete lack of ability to be genuinely affectionate with others. They may seem distant, insincere or uncaring and have difficulty trusting others.

Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD)

ADD/ADHD is a diagnosable, treatable, biologically based disorder. The primary symptoms include some combination of being inattentive and being distracted, being impulsive, and in some children, physical restlessness or hyperactive behavior.

Developmental Disabilities (DD)

This term describes many conditions that may be mild or severe and generally includes any physical, mental or emotional condition, which will continue to inhibit the normal developmental progress of a child. Many children have educational requirements that must be met through the Special Education process of their school.

Drug-Exposed

A child born to a mother who used drugs such as cocaine or certain pharmaceuticals while she was pregnant may have damage to their nervous system. A newborn will appear stiff and rigid and have prolonged crying episodes and be at an increased risk for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Some children will develop behavior and learning difficulties.

A child’s challenges can range from mild to severe, and be temporary or permanent. The environment provided in a child’s future development, that may include you as their parent, will to a great degree affect the measure of their challenges.

Emotional Disability (ED)

Abuse, trauma and sometimes genetics can result in various degrees of multiple emotional challenges. This term is also used as eligibility criteria for services at school through Special Education under state and federal law.

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Fetal Alcohol Effects (FAS/FAE)

Alcohol-Related Neurodevelopmental Disorder (ARND)

FAS/FAE is a set of physical, mental and neurobehavioral birth defects associated with alcohol consumption by a child's birth mother during pregnancy. Prenatal alcohol exposure does not always result in FAS—although there is no known safe level of alcohol consumption during pregnancy. Some children affected by alcohol exposure before birth do not have the characteristic facial abnormalities and growth retardation identified with FAS, yet they have brain and other impairments that are just as significant. Alcohol-Related Neurodevelopmental Disorder (ARND) describes the functional or mental impairments linked to prenatal alcohol exposure.

Learning Disability

Children with learning disabilities may be of average or above average intelligence but have difficulties remembering or understanding information. This term is also used as eligibility criteria for services at school through Special Education under state and federal law.

Mental Disability

Mental disabilities is a term that is used to describe a wide variety of different challenges and can affect children in ways that are unique to each child, especially in regards to levels of severity. This is also a term used as eligibility criteria for Special Education services.

Neglect

Neglect is the absence of essential and healthy nurturing of a child for their physical, intellectual, and emotional development. Neglect includes physical neglect, child abandonment and expulsion, medical neglect, inadequate supervision, emotional neglect and educational neglect by parents, parent substitutes, and other adult caretakers of children. Children who have experienced neglect may be--problems.

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The Legal Aspects of Adoption

Prospective adoptive parents should consult an attorney for legal advice and as they prepare to adopt a child.

Selecting an Attorney

Federal and state laws that apply to foster care and adoption require certain steps to be followed prior to the finalization of an adoption. It is important to have an attorney to represent you in the adoption process. Your family, friends or individuals you know who have adopted may be able to recommend an attorney for legal advice and you can find out more information on attorneys from your local county Bar Association. Sometimes it is helpful for an attorney to have knowledge of the foster care system.

For a referral to an attorney trained by ACT in adoptions from foster care, or for a free consultation with an ACT-trained attorney, please view the following website for contact information at: www.adoptioninchildtime.org

Attorney Fees

Attorney fees vary around the state. You will need to ask the attorney what fees they charge and how they bill their services. Since some children are eligible for an adoption subsidy (a one-time reimbursement of legal fees or non-recurring adoption expenses with a maximum expenditure of \$1500 per child) your attorney may be able to assist you in applying the subsidy to their fees.

Approval

Prospective adoptive parents need an approved Family Preparation Assessment (Home Study) to be recommended for a child who is a ward. Your local county Department of Child Services (DCS) and/or the private agency (LCPA) that contracts with the county must determine if you have been approved. You are required to have written approval before a child can be placed with you for adoption and through your local court jurisdiction.

Agency Supervision

Indiana law requires that adoptions be granted only after a period of supervision has been met. The child and adoptive family relationship must be supervised by a local county Department of Child Services or private child placing agency (LCPA) that contracts with them. The length of the supervision period is at the discretion of the court, however most courts require a standard time period of six months.

Required Consents

The consent of the child's mother, if she is living, is required by law to complete an adoption. The consent of a child's father who has established paternity or signed a paternity affidavit is also required. The county Department of Child Services (DCS) may have completed a court action to terminate the parent-child relationship so that a child who is a ward can be legally free for adoption, whether the child's parents have consented or not determines the type of court action that is necessary. You will need the consent of the CDCS that has the responsibility of care and supervision of the child you wish to adopt for the court proceedings, unless the court finds that their consent is not necessary to serve the best interests of the child.

Adoption Petition Filing

In Indiana, an attorney needs to file the adoption petition and represent the family through the court process. A petition may be filed in the county where the pre-adoptive parent resides, or in the county where the child resides, or where the Department of Child Services (DCS) or private agency (LCPA) has custody of the child. If you are not an Indiana resident, you may petition to adopt a child who is a ward of Indiana in the county where the LCPA or DCS has custody or the county where the child resides.

If you are married, both you and your spouse must sign the adoption petition. Partners of an unmarried couple may not petition to adopt together and in such cases, only one partner may be the petitioner.

Adoption Filing Fees

The adoption filing fee consists of the following: The adoption history fee, which is \$20 and the putative father registry fee, which is \$50. Both of these fees are sent to the State Department of Health for records maintenance; and the county clerk's office fee, which can range from \$100 to \$200. The court may not require payment of the clerk's fee if you are unable to pay it based on an affidavit regarding your income and expenses.

Adoption Assistance

If a child has been determined eligible for adoption assistance, the adoption assistance agreement **MUST** be signed by all parties before the final adoption is entered.

Adoption Chart

There are four basic types of adoption: public agency adoption, domestic private agency adoption, international adoption, and independent adoption. As the chart below shows, requirements, costs, and timing vary between and within the different types of adoption. To decide which type of adoption is best for you, think seriously about the type of child you would like to adopt (for example, an infant, an older child or group of siblings, a child from another country, a child who has special needs, etc.).

Type of Adoption	Definition	Children Available	Approximate Cost	Who Can Adopt	How Long It Takes
Public agency adoption	an adoption directed and supervised by a state or local Department of Human Services (or Social Services, or Human Resources, or Health and Welfare, or Child and Family Services, etc.)	children with special needs (kids who are harder to place due to emotional or physical disorders, age, race, membership in a sibling group, backgrounds); rarely infants	from \$0 to \$1,500 (depending on the state, up to \$1,500 of "nonrecurring" adoption costs for eligible special needs children may be reimbursed)	flexible eligibility requirements for adoptive parents; on a case-by-case basis, will consider single parents, parents over the age of 40, parents who have other children, parents with low incomes, etc.	starts slowly, but for those who have an updated home study, placement can occur as soon as a few months after selecting a child
Private agency adoption	an adoption directed and supervised by a privately funded, licensed adoption agency	sometimes handle special needs children; more commonly associated with younger children and infants	\$6,000 to \$25,000; lower for special needs children; some agencies have sliding fee scales	agencies may recruit parents based on race, religious affiliation, etc.; for infant adoptions, birth mother often chooses	a few months to a few years (sometimes longer for infant adoption)
International adoption	process of adopting a child who is not a U.S. citizen, which may be accomplished privately through an attorney, or through an international adoption agency	about 88 countries currently allow their children to be adopted by U.S. citizens—6 countries in Africa, 20 in Asia, 32 in Europe, and 30 in Latin America; ages range from infant to teens; health conditions vary; generally infants	\$7,000 to \$30,000 (varies by country; travel and travel-related expenses may be additional)	depends on agency and country requirements; some will accept single parents, most prospective parents are between 25 and 45 years old	six months to several years depending on the child's age and health, and the country's political climate
Independent adoption (not legal in all states; also known as private adoption)	an adoption initiated by prospective adopters and completed with help from an attorney or adoption counselor		\$5,000 to \$40,000 (includes prospective parents' cost of finding a birth mother, certain birth mother expenses, and attorney's fees)	birth mothers typically choose the adoptive parent — preferences tend to run toward younger, affluent, married couples	variable; as long as it takes to find a birth mother who will see the process through to finalization

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Youth Connections Program

The Department of Child Services (DCS) works with teens who are ages 14 through 18 for whom an adoptive family has not been identified or who have expressed that they do not want to be adopted; but the youth need a caring adult in their life to help them make the transition to adulthood.

The Youth Connections Program has been implemented to assist teens who will be on their own when they leave foster care. Every young person aging out of foster care should have at least one caring adult in their life whom they can count on to be there for them when they need support, guidance, advice and resources.

What can you do? Consider that a teen on their own will need someone to talk to; for advice or a sympathetic ear or to celebrate a birthday, they may need help finding a job, finishing school, or locating a safe place to live, a place to do laundry or use the telephone, a ride to work, an occasional meal, some emergency cash, they may need a coat or someone to advocate for them.

Youth Connections Program Specialists will provide support to the adults and teens to help build and sustain a relationship that will nurture a long-term connection. They will assist in identifying Independent Living services and community resources for the teen.

To find out how you can help and to receive further information on the program, please contact one of the people listed below, nearest to your own location.



Beth Prebeck
Southern Youth Connections Specialist
DCS Brown County Office
121 Locust Lane, P.O. Box 325
Nashville, IN 47448-0325
812-988-2239 (Work)
317-439-6599 (Cell)
812-988-1279 (fax)
Beth.Prebeck@dcs.in.gov

Barbara A. Gainer
Northern Indiana YCP Specialist
Youth Connections Program
217 East Southway Blvd, Suite 202
Kokomo, IN 46901
765-865-2212
765-864-3000 fax
Barbara.Gainer@dcs.in.gov

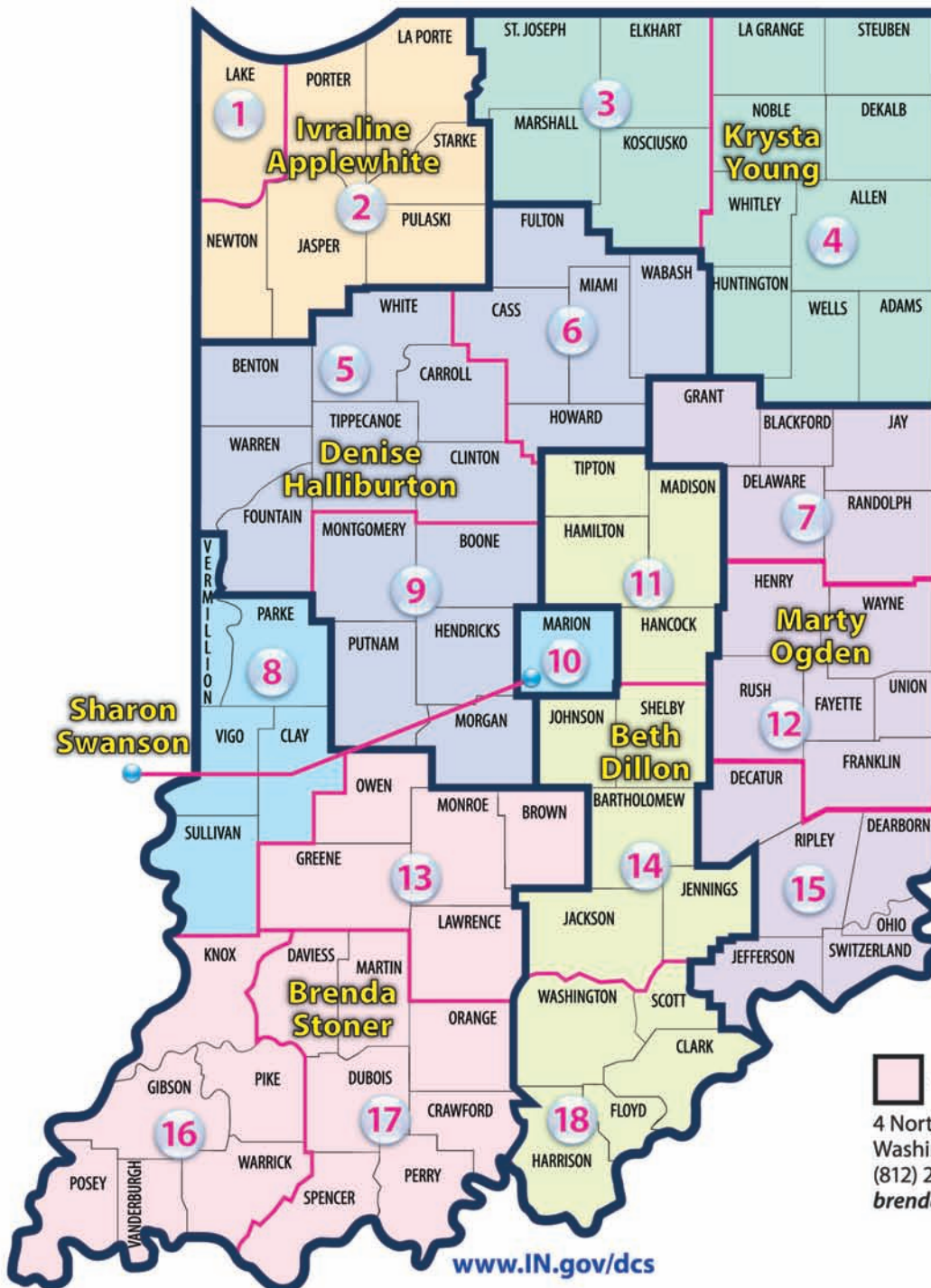
Area Specialist Locator Map

Thank you for your interest in Indiana's Adoption Program.

This map shows the Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP) specialist who coordinates adoption information for their Team.

For more information, please call the toll-free number—

1-888-25-ADOPT



Sharon Swanson
4150 N. Keystone Avenue
Indianapolis, Indiana 46205-2843
(317) 544-3890
Sharon.Swanson@dcs.in.gov

Ivraline Applewhite
661 Broadway
Gary, Indiana 46402
(219) 881-2043, ext: 13280
Ivraline.applewhite@dcs.in.gov

Krysta Young
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Fort Wayne, Indiana 46806
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krysta.young@dcs.in.gov

Denise Halliburton
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Beth Dillon
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4 North East 21st Street
Washington, Indiana 47501
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www.IN.gov/dcs

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*Subscription information
is available in this book on
page 3.*

